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To: [Sur, Peter](#)
Subject: Testimony in support of Agenda # VII. 1. Reports/Correspondence, Report from Jennifer Navarra
Date: Monday, September 26, 2022 10:18:55 PM

Aloha Environmental Management Commissioners,
I am submitting this testimony in support of Agenda VII. 1. report from Jennifer Navarra, Coordinator, Zero Waste Hawai'i Island (ZWHI).

Jennifer and I have worked together on projects to seek support for various issues of environmental concern, particularly those affecting our State and especially, Hawai'i Island. This item is important and timely because significant federal funding (\$275 million) through the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Solid Waste Infrastructure for Recycling grant program will become available in the next few months when the EPA issues a Request For Applications (RFA).

In June, when the EPA issued a Request For Information (RFI), Jennifer and I worked with a group representing ZWHI, Hawai'i County Department of Environmental Management staff, and community members with experience in recycling, reuse and source reduction. We developed a survey and, as called for in the EPA's RFI, sent it to representatives of public and private stakeholders--community groups, nonprofits, agricultural and small businesses, and Native Hawaiian organizations. Seventy-six respondents expressed their needs for the availability of organic waste as soil amendments (agriculture), post-consumer processing facilities and end markets for reusable materials such as construction and demolition waste, to name a few. The feedback was invaluable and indicates a gaping hole in our County's ability to divert solid waste from landfilling. For example, several survey respondents were farmers who have volcanic soil that needs organic nutrients such as can be found in food, cardboard and green wastes. Diverting organics from landfilling reduces CO2 emissions while providing farmers with organic matter that is produced on-island. This is a boost to our farmers in reducing their costs of using imported nutrients AND it increases food security for our Island's communities. WIN, WIN, WIN for farmers, the environment and our residents!

FACILITATOR NEEDED FOR STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Due to the unexpectedly high response rate (76 respondents) and the actual written responses, a facilitator is needed to bring together survey respondents and other stakeholders, both public and private, to develop agreement on HOW our County's solid waste infrastructure can be organized for community and stakeholder access, reduction in landfilling solid waste resources, and mitigating climate change.

I urge the EMC to request that the County Council support the hiring of a facilitator to bring stakeholders together to identify how best to meet their needs through solid waste diversion from landfilling and the building of an effective resource recovery program. And furthermore, I request that the results of the facilitated sessions be incorporated into the grant application as evidence of stakeholder engagement and the development of public-private partnerships.

GRANT WRITER NEEDED

A compilation of research and an analysis of the surveys were used to write the report submitted to the EPA in response to the RFI. However, writers of the report are ineligible as nonprofits and small business owners to apply for the RFA when it is issued by the EPA.

Counties and states are the only eligible entities that can apply for the EPA's recycling Infrastructure grant RFA.

Therefore, because much of the background work on identifying recycling and reuse needs for potential public and private stakeholders has been done through the RFI, I urge the EMC to request that the County Council support the TIMELY hiring of a grant writer SPECIFICALLY to apply for the EPA Solid Waste Infrastructure for Recycling grant. And furthermore, I request that the report submitted for the RFI and the results of the facilitated sessions be incorporated into the grant application, as applicable.

Mahalo for considering my testimony.
Ellen Okuma